

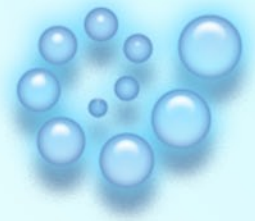


# Avatar

TeenHelp.org's eZine  
Volume 2, Issue 1 | July 2008

Happy  
Anniversary

**TeenHelp.org**,  
July 13th 1998-present



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## Letter from the Editors

Hello everyone, and welcome to the second volume of Avatar! We've got a fresh design and some fresh content lined up for you.

We'd like to start by announcing that we have recently celebrated TeenHelp's 10th year anniversary! It's been a wonderful 10 years, and we hope that there are many more to come. Through the years there have been a lot of changes to the site, a lot of support and advice shared, many new faces, and many old ones returned. Thank you all for being a part in what TeenHelp was and is today.

Next we'd like to explain what happened in June. Those diehard Avatar fans among you might have missed us last month. This was because some members of the editorial team have had busy lives recently, and it was difficult to finish the issue off. And thus instead of rushing it, we thought we'd take our time. Since it's the dawn of volume 2, we wanted to make sure it was right!

As for our content, we had hoped to start this edition off with an interview with Branden Thomas, the creator of TeenHelp, but unfortunately we haven't heard back from him yet, so this will probably be coming next month! Our content instead starts with news coverage from all around the world. If you've missed some or have been falling behind on news and would like to catch up, this article is for you. In addition to the news, we have three great articles for you. The first article explains a few precautions we should all take to ensure good health during summer. The second is on eating disorders, which includes some personal experiences and advice if you have or think you may have one. And last, but certainly not least, the third article is the first of a three part article on natural disasters. This particular part explains many of the causes of each disaster listed. Finally, we're going to wrap up this edition with some brain teasers, self expression, and horoscopes.

We hope that you all enjoy this edition of Avatar!

The Avatar Editorial Team.

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Your valuable contributions are what make Avatar what it is. Please submit us your content, whether it be an article, poem, joke, game, photo, drawing or anything else you have to share!

Email us at  
[avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org)



## By Ryan (Vessol)

### May 1

- The United States Federal Reserve System auctions off \$24.12 billion in Treasury securities to help relieve the subprime mortgage crisis.

### May 2

- Cyclone Nargis makes landfall in Burma causing massive damage and deaths. Over the next few weeks the amount of those killed continues to rise, in the end the confirmed mount of those killed is roughly 90,000 people and 56,000 still missing. The government of Burma faces much controversy for both denying aid for a short while to its citizens, not letting aid workers into the country, stealing aid supplies and stockpiling or selling it, as well as refusing to count bodies to reduce the political fallout.
- Boris Johnson, candidate of the Conservative Party, is elected mayor of London.
- A confirmed 50 tornadoes cause massive damage and 7 deaths in the United States southeast.

### May 3

- Microsoft withdraws its bid to buy-out Yahoo as neither can make an agreement on price.

### May 5

- The United States Federal Reserve System reports that banks are tightening lending standards on their loans and mortgages in response to the sub prime mortgage crisis.
- Food riots are held in Mogadishu in protest of rising food prices. At least two rioters are killed by Somalian troops.

### May 6

- Chilean authorities order the total evacuation of the towns of Chaitén and Futaleufú after the eruption of the Chaitén volcano.

### May 7

- Dmitry Medvedev assumes the role of the President of Russia.
- Fighting in Lebanon was sparked by a government move to shut down Hezbollah's telecommunication network and remove Beirut Airport's security chief over alleged ties to Hezbollah. Hezbollah official, Hassan Nasrallah considered it a 'declaration of war' by the Lebanese government and demanded it be revoked. In the following days street fighting between Government-loyalist forces and Hezbollah militants erupted resulting in the deaths of roughly 70 people.

### May 8

- The torch for the 2008 Summer Olympic in Beijing reaches the summit of Mount Everest.

### May 10

- A tornado outbreak in the United States kills 23 people.
- Darfur rebels clash with Sudanese troops. After heavy street fighting in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, the Sudanese government breaks diplomatic ties with the nation of Chad, claiming they backed the rebel attack.

### May 12

- An earthquake of 8.0 magnitude strikes the Chinese province of Sichuan. 69,016 are confirmed dead (as of June 1st) and up to 11 million people are homeless.

### May 13

- A series of bomb blasts hits the Indian city of Jaipur, killing at least 60 people and injuring 150.

### May 14

- NASA announces the discovery of the youngest known supernova remnant in the Milky Way Galaxy, G1.9+0.3.
- The polar bear is announced a endangered species by the United States Department of Interior. Reasons cited are declining ice levels in the Arctic due to global warming.

# The TeenHelp Times

May 2008 (continued...)



## By Ryan (Vessol)

### May 15

- CBS Corporation agrees to buy CNET Networks for \$1.75 billion.
- The California Supreme Court rules that a ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional under California state constitution.

### May 16

- Leonel Fernández is re-elected as the President of the Dominican Republic.
- One hundred people are killed in a pipeline explosion near Lagos, Nigeria.
- The United States reaches a deal with North Korea to resume food aid with 500,000 tonnes of food to be sent to North Korea during the next year.
- An audio message purposively by Al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, is found on the Internet where he vows to continue the fight against Israel.
- In Lafayette, Louisiana more than 3,000 people are evacuated after a train crash that had leaked hydrochloric acid.
- United States President, George W. Bush, states that a Palestinian state can be defined by the end of his term.

### May 17

- Russia wins the 2008 IIHF World Championship defeating Canada 5-4 in overtime

### May 19

- In the United Kingdom, a vote to outlaw human-animal hybrid embryos is defeated by 336 votes to 176.
- In South Africa 6,000 people flee from Johannesburg after a wave of violence against foreigners by mobs leaving 22 people dead. South African police forces crack down on the violence resulting in the death of at least 1 rioter.
- The PRC Government declares three days of mourning for the victims of the Sichuan earthquake. At 2:28 PM CST a three-minute moment of silence was observed across the nation. Vehicle traffic was stopped and people stood silent for three minutes while air defense, police and fire sirens, and the horns of vehicles, vessels and trains sounded.

### May 20

- Ten thousand Iraqi troops enter Sadr City in Baghdad to seize control from Shiite militants.

### May 21

- The first supernova to be observed exploding, SN 2008D, is reported by NASA.
- Crude oil prices rise about \$130 per barrel for the first time.

### May 23

- Hu Jintao, the President of China, and the President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev condemn the United States' National missile defense system in Eastern Europe.

### May 24

- Dima Bilan of Russia wins the Eurovision Song Contest 2008 with the song "Believe".
- A 5.9 earthquake strikes Columbia, killing at least 11 people.
- Flooding in Chili results in the death of of at least 5 people and the displacement of 15,000 more.
- Prince Joachim of Denmark marries Marie Cavallier.

### May 25

- Eight people are killed across the United States due to severe thunder storms and tornadoes.
- Michel Suleiman is elected as President of the Republic of Lebanon.
- The Phoenix lander arrives at Mars
- New Zealand driver Scott Dixon wins the Indianapolis 500.

### May 26

- The International Atomic Energy Agency accuses Iran of hiding information of alleged studies of nuclear warheads and refusing demands to suspend its uranium enrichment.
- The European Beaver is reintroduced to Scotland after 400 years.

### May 27

- Scientists decipher the first complete DNA sequence of a woman.

# The TeenHelp Times

May 2008 (continued...)



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## By Ryan (Vessol)

### May 28

- Engineers in Pisa, Italy announce that the Leaning Tower has been stabilized and should remain stabilized for the next 200 years. However it is still leaning.
- Paleontologists announce the discovery of a fossil of Materpiscis, a 380-million-year-old placoderm-fish which is the earliest known animal to bear live young.
- Over 100 nations in Dublin, Ireland sign an agreement to ban cluster bombs. Notable among those who do not sign the agreement are the United States, Russia, and China.
- Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, is called to resign under allegations of bribery and corruption.
- The Nepalese Constituent Assembly declares Nepal to be a federal, democratic republic abolishing the 240 year old Nepalese monarchy.

### May 29

- An earthquake strikes Iceland, measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale. Only 30 injuries are announced.
- In Mongolia 26 people are reported dead and 51 missing after a massive snowstorm.
- The World Bank announces a US\$1.2 billion package to fight the global food crisis.

### May 31

- Usain Bolt of Jamaica sets a new world record for the 100 meters dash at 9.72 seconds.
- The PRC Government prepare to evacuate 1 million people as they drain the Tangjiashan Lake created by the Sichuan earthquake.
- Fighting erupts in Sri Lanka between the Sri Lanka Army and the rebel group, Tamil Tigers, resulting in at least 30 deaths.
- The World Health Organization calls for complete ban on tobacco advertising; the organization says recent studies prove the more young people are exposed to tobacco advertising, the more likely they are to start smoking.



## By Ryan (Vessol)

### June 1

- Around 500 Australian troops withdraw from Iraq, ending Australia's combat role in Iraq.

### June 2

- A suicide bomber attacks the Danish embassy in the Pakistani capital, killing eight. Al-Qaeda claims responsibility, citing the Muhammad cartoon controversy.
- Investigating claims by the United States, The International Atomic Energy Agency sends a team to Syria.
- The United Nations Security Council unanimously passes a declaration allowing foreign military vessels into Somali waters to deal with the recent rise in piracy in the region.

### June 3

- Ten thousand jobs are lost as General Motors announces the closure of four automobile factories. It later announces the new development of a small car which will have 45 miles to the gallon to combat rising gasoline prices.
- The High-Level Conference on World Food Security is opened in Rome, held by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, aimed at discussing the currently rising food prices and crisis across the world.
- The Detroit Red Wings win the Stanley Cup against the Pittsburgh Penguins in a 3-2 game.

### June 6

- The Diet of Japan recognizes the Ainu as an indigenous people for the first time.
- The Caribbean Monk Seal is declared officially extinct.
- An explosion targeting a bus in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Killing at least 21 and injuring more than 80.

### June 7

- Hillary Clinton suspends her campaign for president of the United States and endorses Barack Obama, the now Democrat nominee.

### June 8

- A 6.5 magnitude earthquake strikes Greece, killing 2 and causing massive damage.
- A gas-pipe explosion kills twelve miners at a coal mine in Ukraine.
- Seven people are killed and ten injured in a stabbing spree in Japan.

### June 9

- IBM and Los Alamos National Laboratory break processing speed barrier with the world's first petaflop computer, Roadrunner.

### June 11

- Cuba introduces a wages system where workers are paid according to productivity rather than all workers in the same job receiving the same income, this is one of many changes in the nation many are referring to as a widespread change from a socialist society to a capitalist society.
- Same-sex marriage is legalized in Norway.

### June 12

- Cuban hurdler Dayron Robles sets a world record of 12.87 seconds for the 110 metre hurdles

### June 13

- American political news reporter Tim Russert dies after collapsing at the NBC Washington D.C. Bureau offices where he worked.
- A Taliban attack on a prison in Kandahar, Afghanistan allows almost all of the 1150 inmates to escape, including 390 Taliban inmates.
- Irish voters reject the Treaty of Lisbon in a referendum

### June 14

- A 6.8 magnitude earthquake strike Japan, killing at least 6 and injuring 8.

# The TeenHelp Times

June 2008 (continued...)



## By Ryan (Vessol)

### June 15

- August: Osage County wins the 62nd Tony Award for best play and In the Heights wins best musical.
- Flooding caused by heavy rain in southern China leaves at least six people dead, four missing and 150,000 people evacuated from Guangdong and Guangxi provinces. Throughout the month the flood leaves more than 200 dead with the number rising and the flooding continuing as millions more are evacuated.

### June 16

- An official of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that effect food crisis on Somalia is creating a worse humanitarian situation than the War in Darfur.

### June 17

- In the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, the Chinese government faces growing criticism from grieving parents who allege that corrupt and shoddy construction was behind the disproportionately high number of collapsed school buildings
- Tsutomu Miyazaki, known as "The Otaku Murderer", is executed by hanging in Tokyo for the murders and cannibalization of four young girls in 1988 and 1989.
- The Boston Celtics defeat the Los Angeles Lakers to win the 2008 NBA Finals.

### June 19

- Commencing at dawn, the Israeli Government and Hamas declare a truce in the Israel-Gaza conflict, halting attacks across the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel.

### June 20

- NASA believes it has found water ice on Mars.

### June 21

- Typhoon Fengshen causes severe damage in the Philippines and China, results in at least 1354 deaths and leaves 41 people missing. 800 of the 856 people on board the Princess of the Stars were killed when the ship capsized during the storm.

### June 24

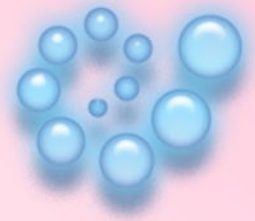
- Plans are unveiled for the world's first swirling skyscraper in Dubai, with each floor rotating up to once an hour to form an ever-changing profile on the skyline.
- The U.S. state of Florida purchases 187,000 acres from the US Sugar Corporation to add to protected lands in the Everglades.

### June 26

- The United States removes North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism as the nation releases details of its nuclear program, later North Korea destroys its cooling tower at the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center. Later food aid is restored to the nation by the United States.
- In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court of the United States holds in District of Columbia v. Heller that the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution protects an individual right to own a firearm and keep it on their property, ruling a District of Columbia gun control law unconstitutional and putting many other similar measures in jeopardy.

### June 27

- Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft, finishes work at the company before starting fulltime philanthropic work for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



# Summer health

By Kathy (drowningangel)

It's closing in on the end of the school year, and the same thought is on every student's mind: **SUMMER VACATION**. Summer can bring a lot of fun, a much needed break, but it can also bring the possibility of health problems. Sunburns, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and dehydration are all examples of what can happen during the summer heat waves. As each can be quite serious, you have to learn how to avoid these catastrophes.

I'm going to give you each some tips and guidelines to keep these things from happening so that you can fully enjoy your summer vacation.

## Sunburns

The sun and its effects on the skin should be taken very seriously, no matter what your age is. Excessive sun exposure without protection can cause a lot of problems later on in life, problems such as skin cancer.

Here are some tips you should follow in order to protect yourself and dramatically lower your chances for skin issues as you age:

- Stay in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during the peak hours of the day – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Use a sunscreen of at least SPF (sun protection factor) 15. Reapply every two hours, after swimming or excessive sweating.
- Use extra precautions around snow, sand, and water. They reflect the sun's rays, making them more intense and likely to burn your skin.
- Cotton clothing and rimmed hats are a good idea to cover up. Tighter weave cotton clothing, especially lighter colors, reflect UV rays away from your body and skin.

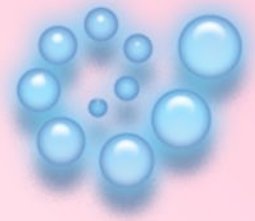
## Dehydration

Another summer concern that should be taken seriously is dehydration. It's a very real threat which can lead to death, so we should all know steps to take to reduce this possibility.

- **STAY HYDRATED.** Yes, this is pushed and pushed hard during the summer, but it's utterly critical in preventing dehydration and possibly death due to heat. At least 9 ounces of fluid, such as water or sports drinks (Gatorade, Powerade, etc), should be consumed every half hour for a healthy teenager. If the teen is already sick or at an unhealthy weight, they may need to drink more. (An ounce is usually 2 teen-sized gulps.)
- Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Chances are if you wait until you're thirsty to drink something, you're already becoming or are dehydrated. Thirst doesn't usually kick in until 2% of the body fluids are lost as sweat.
- Do not gulp water down when you stop for breaks. Doing so, especially once hot, sweaty, and thirsty, can cause severe stomach cramps and even induce vomiting. Drink evenly and slowly, no matter how badly you want to down it all.







## Summer health (continued...)

By Kathy (drowningangel)

### Heat Sickness

Dehydration usually goes along with this. There are three stages of heat illness:

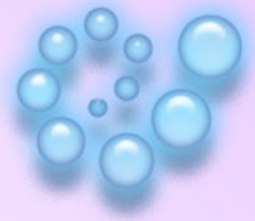
- .Heat cramps: painful cramps of the abdomen, legs, and arms.
- .Heat exhaustion: dizziness, nausea, vomiting, headaches, weakness, and cramping.
- .Heat stroke: fever of 104 or higher and severe symptoms (nausea, vomiting, seizures, delirium, lack of sweating, shortness of breath, unconsciousness, coma, and even death)

If any of the above symptoms are exhibited, get out of the heat immediately. Even for heat cramps, it doesn't take long for the stages to progress to heat stroke, which may require hospitalization. It can induce comas and death. In Tennessee alone last year between the months of June and August, over a dozen people of all ages were killed from heat illness and dehydration. For children, the ill, and the elderly, even heat cramps can become very dangerous very quickly.

Always take precautions where heat and the sun are concerned, no matter your age or how silly you may think it seems. It's a very real and extremely dangerous concern, so don't just brush it off. For those of you who babysit or have younger siblings, always implement these precautions, and keep an eye out for any symptoms of dehydration or heat illness.

Hopefully these tips can ensure that you have a wonderful, exciting, and safe summer.





## Teen to teen: Let's talk

### By Angela (beautiful4life)

High school is the hardest time in a teenager's life. With schoolwork, preparing for college, parents and the stress of finals, things can really make you feel quite pressured. In addition to the previously mentioned issues, imagine also dealing with the battle of your own body. Some teenagers do just that, some develop an eating disorder in the process. I'm one of those teenagers who deal with body image issues. My name is Angela, and I'm now a senior in high school.

While eating disorders can develop at any age, this disorder often comes out in the teen years. Dealing with an eating disorder can be very difficult. We each see the messages on T.V. about the idea that "thin is in", we feel pressure to be in the "in crowd" and hear many other things that can trigger this unhealthy behavior. Because a lot of the messages brought across say that thin equals happiness and normality, many people feel that they don't belong if they aren't thin. In some cases, no matter how thin the teenager becomes, he or she will never feel thin enough. This is the start of the eating disorder's demands, one which will only become more intense as the sufferer gets drawn further and further in.

The precise form these demands take will depend on the particular eating disorder to which the sufferer falls prey. It may be anorexia, in which case the sufferer will feel obliged to restrict their food intake and possibly also exercise compulsively to be as thin as possible. Alternatively, the sufferer may become bulimic and alternate between eating inappropriately large amounts of food and using unhealthy purging behaviors to compensate for this. A third scenario is where low self esteem leads the sufferer to believe that no matter what they do they will never be happy, attractive, successful and all the other positive qualities associated with being thin. This leads to conditions such as compulsive over-eating and binge eating disorder, in which the sufferer eats inappropriately large amounts without resorting to the compensatory purging behaviors associated with bulimia.

It should be pointed out that these three categories are not mutually exclusive, and that many sufferers show symptoms of a combination of these disorders at the same time, or go through periods of each of them. Another important point to bear in mind is that, however strange this may sound, eating disorders are not actually to do with food and weight. The more fundamental issue is the low self-esteem that leads

sufferers to believe that they can only be acceptable if they are thin rather than focusing on more positive and achievable goals. It should also be remembered that people with eating disorders may not necessarily be at an obviously unhealthy weight.

Without meaning to be unduly morbid, it has to be said for the sake of anyone contemplating going down the path of any kind of eating disorder that all of them can be deadly. Anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric condition (including depression and schizophrenia) and all eating disorder behaviors carry their own risks. Sufferers may die from the physical damage caused by the eating disorder, or the mental and emotional turmoil of living with an eating disorder may eventually drive them to suicide.

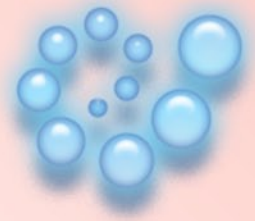
#### **How can eating disorders be prevented, or what strategies can those already suffering from them use to get help them?**

The most important part of this is developing the healthy self-esteem necessary to resist the societal pressures by which we are constantly surrounded. Most sufferers use eating disorder behaviors as "punishment" for their perceived inadequacies and failures. Therefore, recognition that appearance and weight are not the be-all and end-all, and that everyone needs and deserves adequate nutrition is an essential component in recovering from an eating disorder or preventing one from developing in the first place. This can be achieved by using positive affirmations.

Associated with the mentioned may be a need to identify and work on the issues that caused low self-esteem to develop in the first place. When and from who did we first get the message that we were somehow "inadequate" or "unacceptable", and why did we fix on food and eating as the way to deal with that? Write down each thing, then focus on working on it step by step.

Please keep in mind, though, that these strategies in no way replace the proper professional help that one should get if you are or feel you are suffering with an eating disorder.

The final message is that eating disorders can cause great pain to those who suffer from them, but that there is hope! Recovery is possible, so never give up.



# When nature fights back: Part 1 - Causes of disasters

By Ryan (Vessol)

From the tsunami in Burma to the earthquake in China, and all the tornadoes in between, our world has cluttered our news lately of extreme weather. Not to mention that summertime in the Northern hemisphere is when the majority of extreme weather occurs.

This is the first section of a three part article that will span during the three summer months of the year. This first part will be about what causes various disasters around the world, while the second part will explain what to do in the case of a disaster in your area. The concluding part will deal with the history and statistics of these disasters, which will include the basics you should include in a survival kit. Be sure to check future editions of Avatar!

## Earthquakes

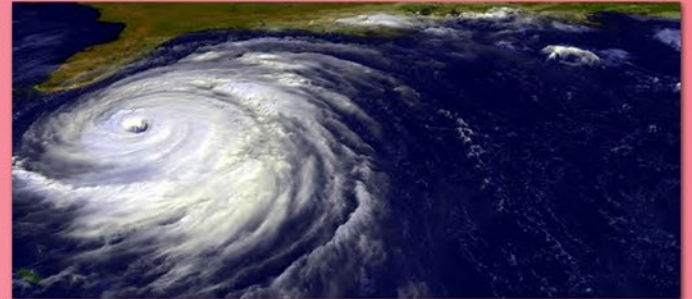


The planet's crust is divided into different "pieces". These pieces are called tectonic plates, plates which move and press against each other. In majority of cases, earthquakes are caused by these shifting plates.

Earthquakes are also caused by various other events, events such as releases of methane gases in the Earth, too massive explosions (such as that of a nuke or similar strength), and volcanic events.

Earthquakes can occur anywhere, but in many places they will be too small to even feel. Depending on the various types of fault lines in an area, though an exact prediction is impossible, scientists can often predict the likelihood and strength to which an earthquake might be. To measure the strength of magnitude waves, American seismologist, Charles Richter, developed the Richter scale. The Richter scale rates earth tremors on a scale from 1 to 9, with 9 being the most powerful, and each number representing an increase of ten times the energy over the previous number. A 4.5 strength earthquake can cause damage, and anything higher than a 7 is considered severe.

## Hurricane/Cyclone/Typhoon



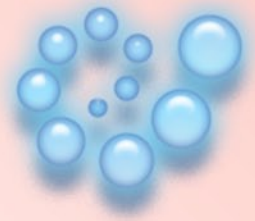
Hurricanes, cyclones, and typhoons are all the same thing. They are simply named differently. Hurricane is just the name used in the Northern Atlantic and Northeast Pacific, while the rest of the Pacific uses Typhoon and the Indian Ocean and Australia uses the word Cyclone.

All tropical cyclones are composed of a low pressure center or eye. Surrounding the eye are storms that move in a counter-clockwise motion around it. While it starts as a tropical storm, to become a cyclone it must gather energy from the rising moist air which then condenses and strengthens the storm. Tropical cyclones can have wind speeds ranging from 56 to higher than 120mph. Various regions have different classifications for the various strengths of cyclones, but usually you can expect the amount of damage to increase exponentially the stronger the winds are. Along with heavy rain and strong winds, cyclones can create strong waves that can cause damage to structures on the shoreline. Flooding is very common with cyclones. In most cases, upon reaching a large landmass, a cyclone dies down and dissipates as it loses its energy it gained from the warm water in the ocean.

## Floods

Flooding can be caused by numerous incidents. The most common cause is too much rain, which leads to the flooding of rivers and lakes, which are commonly inhabited. In most cases flooding is slow, and usually this allows people time to evacuate. On the contrary, there are many instances of flash flooding that can drown and drag many people away in the fast torrents of water.





## When nature fights back: Part 1 - Causes of disasters (continued...)

By Ryan (Vessol)

The main cause of damage and death from floods is due to contamination of fresh water supplies, destroying crops, and standing water-spreading diseases. Other causes of floods could be from a heavy snow melt off, a cyclone, or artificial causes-such as a dam breaking. The main danger there, though, would be the rushing water.

### Tornadoes

Tornadoes are most common in the United States, which is due to its relative size and its unique geographic characteristics. However, there are many tornadoes throughout the world. The UK has the most annually in Europe, although tornadoes in the UK are usually weaker than tornadoes in the United States.



Tornadoes develop from a type of thunder storm called a super cell, which is full of mesocyclones, which is areas of organized rotation a few miles up in the atmosphere. Increasing rainfall drags quickly, descending air called a rear flank downdraft, which then accelerates and drags the mesocyclone down with it. As it approaches the ground, visible condensation of water occurs around it. This lends to our ability to see the actual tornado, which in itself is invisible to the naked eye. Warm air powers it as it touches down and it can last from a few minutes to more than an hour until its energy runs out.

### Tsunami/Tidal Wave

Tsunamis, like floods, can be caused by many things. In most cases they are due to earthquakes, but they are also commonly caused from volcano eruptions, tropical cyclones, massive explosions, massive landslides, and large asteroid impacts. In all cases, it is a wall of water formed by kinetic energy that then rushes forward until it loses its energy. It is incredibly destructive and can destroy almost all infrastructure if it hits on land with enough force. Flooding is usually very common in an area hit by a tsunami. Storm surges caused by large storms such as a tropical cyclone could also be considered tsunamis.

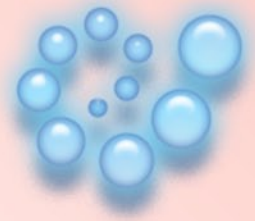


### Forest/Bush/Wild Fires

Wild fires are very common around the world. They are mostly due to drought and a lack of water, which then allow plants to catch fire more easily. Most commonly they are caused by a lightning strike, volcanic activity, arson, and human carelessness.

Wild fires can gain a massive size and reach extreme speeds as they spread. They are a regular and required part of nature, though, and they often replenish much of the plant life in the area. The main damage concern is of property and building damage.





## When nature fights back: Part 1 - Causes of disasters (continued...)

By Ryan (Vessol)

### Avalanche/Landslide

Landslides are most commonly caused by earthquakes and other seismic activity including volcanic activity and human activities. Erosion is also another common cause, as the soil loses its ability to hold in one place.



There are many types of landslides, in most cases it is the weakening of a part of the ground as it is pushed on by gravitational forces, which then is released, pulling along with it other debris it picks up. Avalanches are similar to landslides, but are more common and occur on a mountain with snow.

### Drought

Generally, lack of precipitation is the main cause of drought. The lack of snow can cause less snow pack in places who rely on their snow pack for water. Lack of rain can be caused by winds carrying continental instead of oceanic air masses (less precipitation). Deforestation and erosion are another common cause, as they reduce the ability of the soil to hold moisture. Many things can result from droughts-famines, wild fires, and other disasters.



### Famine

Famines are widespread shortages of food. Famines are typically induced by a human population exceeding the regional carrying capacity to provide food resources. This is most commonly caused by bad harvests, overpopulation, and epidemic diseases. Natural disasters can commonly trigger famines as well. However, in most cases in recent times, famines are usually caused by mismanagement of crops and land and poor organization and distribution of supplies. More rarely they can be caused on purpose for various reasons.

Famines are probably one of the, if not the most, destructive natural disaster on the human scale. An estimated 70 million people died in the 20th century from famine.

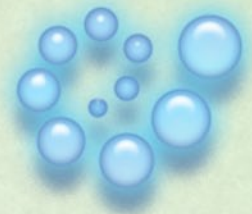


### Epidemic

Epidemics are in essence the spreading of a disease over a large population of people and remaining active in those people. Epidemics can be caused by multiple reasons. Some things that can stimulate the rise of an epidemic can include; changes in population of demographics, poor health, evolution of the pathogen, travel, trade, climate change, and large human population densities.

Don't forget to check the next issue of Avatar for Part 2 of this series. There I will discuss and describe how to increase your chances of survival in the case of a possible disaster, both individually and on a larger scale.





## Brain teasers

By Charlotte (Chazzz)

### Q. (1)

A man and his son were in an automobile accident. The man died on the way to the hospital, but the boy was rushed into surgery. The emergency room surgeon said "I can't operate, that's my son!" How is this possible?

### Q. (3)

Johnny's mother had four children. The first was April, the second was May, and the third was June. What was the name of her fourth child?

### Q. (4)

A light-tight wooden box has three switches on the outside that control three light bulbs on the inside. When the box is closed, you then can turn the switches on or off. When you open the box, though, how can you tell which switch controls each bulb without touching the switches?

### Q. (2)

You are driving a bus. Four people get on, three people get off. After that, eight people get on and ten people get off. Then 6 more people get on and 2 more people get off. What color were the bus driver's eyes?

### A. (1)

The Surgeon is his mother.

### A. (3)

Johnny.

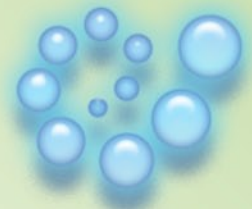
### A. (4)

Turn one switch on for five minutes, then turn it off and turn on another switch before you open the box. One bulb will be lit, one will be warm, and the one that was not switched on will be cool.

### A. (2)

Whatever color your eyes are.

# Self expression



## **A Thousand I Love You's** *By BeautifulNightmare*

A thousand I love you's,  
were here now they're gone.  
A thousand I love you's,  
are based in this song.

A thousand I love you's,  
swept away in the breeze.  
A thousand I love you's,  
left me begging on my knees.

A thousand I love you's,  
were said everyday.  
A thousand I love you's,  
have now gone away.

A thousand I love you's,  
made time stand still.  
A thousand I love you's,  
echo in my mind, always will.

A thousand I love you's,  
make me wish you were here.  
A thousand I love you's,  
have slowly disappeared.

A thousand I love you's,  
washed away in the rain.  
A thousand I love you's,  
I'll never hear again.

## **Untitled** *By Brittany123*

I loved you for so long,  
and never said a thing.  
You were the wind that helped me fly,  
and the voice that helped me sing.

Without you here I'm falling,  
falling quickly to the ground.  
Can't even scream for help,  
I'm falling without a sound.

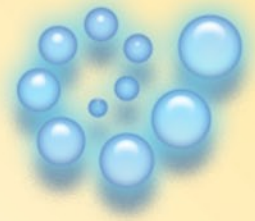
You used to make me happy,  
by simply saying my name.  
So without you here,  
nothing seems the same.

I was almost glad to have you gone,  
'cause I knew now I would not be crushed.  
My friends try to stop me,  
there are things I need to say;  
my voice will not be hushed.

I know I'm the one,  
who said to go away,  
But I realize I was wrong,  
I need you here to stay.

Nothing seems to go right,  
when you're not here with me.  
My heart is a lock,  
to which you hold a key.

Don't want you to leave,  
never did, do, or will.  
Just thought you should know,  
I'm in love with you still.



## Here's your sign

By Josh (musicme3)

**This month's sign:** Gemini (May 21 – July 19)

**Element:** Air

**Mode:** Mutable

**Polarity:** Positive

**Ruling Planet:** Mercury

**Key Phrase:** "I think."

**Common traits:** Dual, versatile, loves to have two of everything, talkative, social.



**Gemini** - During the first part of the month, reinvent yourself! You should allow changes to occur, new beginnings are great. During the 2nd week, changes in your partnerships are more likely to occur. Don't be surprised if someone from your past resurfaces, be it a business relationship or a social relationship. During the 3rd week, money should be well spent. Treat yourself a little. After all, your birthday is soon. Just don't let it become overwhelming, be sure of what you're doing. If something unexpected happens in your home life, don't fret. You'll just have to be a little more flexible. Avoid saying anything you don't mean. At any rate, enjoy your birthday!

And for the rest of the signs...

### Aries

(March 20 – April 19)

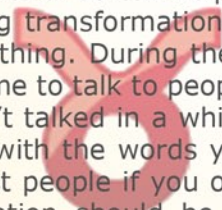
Toward the beginning of July, find a way to change up your communication style. Do you have something you want to change in your neighborhood? Now would be a lovely time to do that. Around the 2nd week, remember that it's ok to change up your philosophies about things. Be open to new ideas. During the 3rd week, spend some time with your family and at home. Appreciate the beauty that surrounds you. Let the emphasis come on your family. After all, they're some of the most important people in your life. Something in regards to things you've kept repressed may take you by surprise now. Now would be an amazing time to learn something new, try something you haven't done before. There's a lesson to be learned in everything.



### Taurus

(April 20 – May 20)

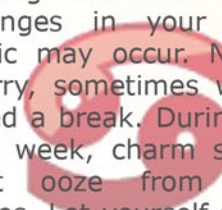
Toward the beginning of this month, it may not hurt you to go on a bit of a shopping spree. Just make sure you don't go and blow all of your money. It may not be a bad time to search for a new means of income, either. During the 2nd week, remember that transformation is a good thing. Sometimes the darkest parts of us can help us achieve an amazing transformation, and that's not a bad thing. During the 3rd week, use this time to talk to people to whom you haven't talked in a while. A charm will come with the words you say that will interest people if you offer it. Your communication should be going very well at this time of the month. Go with it. Look for something in regards to finances to come to a head. If you need to as for a loan, now would be the time to do it. If a situation changes in regards to your friends, wishes, or whatever social group to which you belong, just go with it. This too shall pass.



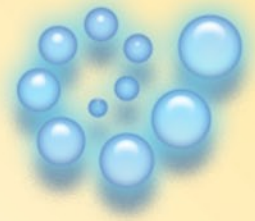
### Cancer

(June 20 – July 21)

During the first part of the month, don't be surprised if new secrets occur. You may have to push something to the back burner. Some things belong there; others don't. You make that decision. During the 2nd week, changes in your work ethic may occur. Not to worry, sometimes we all need a break. During the 3rd week, charm should just ooze from your pores. Let yourself shine. Also be warned that some light may be shed on those secrets that manifested earlier in the month. At any rate, just go with the flow. You may surprise yourself in your manner of thinking.







# Here's your sign (continued...)

## By Josh (musicme3)

### Leo

(July 22 – August 21)

Toward the beginning of the month, remember that it is always good to make new friends. Maybe you should look into joining a new social group. Make new wishes. During the 2nd week, don't be surprised if changes and transformations happen in regards to what you consider "fun." Your romances may even change. This whole month is a great time for you to take initiative! Toward the 3rd week, do something extremely pleasurable. Meet up with someone. Just have fun! Leos are known for that, anyway. Don't be surprised, though, if matters of money and love come into play. Not externally. These thoughts and worries will probably manifest just in your thoughts. You may even put that charm of yours on the back burner. If something unexpected happens in regards to your source of income or something else sort of "dark," don't be surprised. It's okay to explore these secrets. Just remember to do it in solitude. Some things should be kept to yourself.

### Virgo

(August 22 – September 21)

• During the beginning of this month, do something exciting and new in your career and social status. • Change things up! If you don't like how you're being viewed by the public right now, the cosmos are giving you a great opportunity to show them! During the 2nd week, you can find a source of transformation energy at your home. Changes could occur here, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. During the 3rd week, spend some time with your friends and doing the things that you like to do! Just go out and have fun while you can. Emphasis will be put on your friends in the next few weeks, so you might as well make the most of it! Don't be surprised if something comes to a head in matters of home and social status. You should use one to further the other. Don't be surprised if a change (probably non-disruptive) occurs in your partnerships toward the end of the month. I'm inclined to think that this may have something to do with someone from your past resurfacing. I have the utmost faith that you can handle it.

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### Libra

(September 22 - October 22)

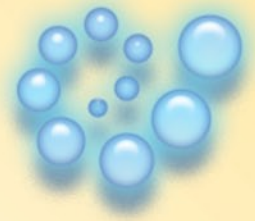
At the beginning of this month, make changes in your philosophies and issues of higher thinking. Let your more imaginative side out. Maybe even take a vacation. Even figuratively. During the 2nd week, you may want to change some things up in your neighborhood and in the way you communicate. Conversations with someone can completely change your life. During the mid-month, look out for your charm to be in full swing. Emphasis will be put on your career and how the public perceives you. Let it be a good reputation. You maybe be thinking now more than you usually do, and that's not a bad thing. Go with it. Where can your mind take you? Toward the end of the month, don't be extremely surprised if a change in work ethic surfaces. It wouldn't hurt to check your health, either. At any rate, let yourself be known.

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### Scorpio

(October 22 – November 20)

• During the start of the month, look for a part of you to be transformed. Let it happen. New experiences are usually good for learning. During the 2nd week, changes in your finances could occur. Don't fret, even this will pass. Take advantage, though. During the 3rd week and mid-month, let your philosophical side out. Consider what you're doing. Why does this work? Why do we do this? Why does this person do this? Asking questions is not usually a bad thing. You may want to take this time and think about your relationships, both present and past. Emphasis will be put on these matters of thought for you, so you might as well take advantage of that, too. Look for financial matters to surface. If you need a loan, ask for it now. Looking for a new job wouldn't be out of the question, either. If you don't need to do that, then at least spice up what you're doing now. Toward the end of the month, don't be surprised if an unexpected change happens in regards to your creativity and romantic-ness.



# Here's your sign (continued...)

**By Josh (musicme3)**

## **Sagittarius**

(November 21 – December 21)

At the beginning of the month, look for changes in your partnerships. This could mean in your romances or in your businesses. This also describes open enemies. Just be careful. Toward the 2nd week, it's okay to transform yourself. Change up your appearance if you wish. During the 3rd week, emphasis will start on your "dark" side. Your romances may be strained at the time. Maybe you can look for a way to up your income now, though. Just remember to take the initiative and contemplate things. Look for something to come to a head between yourself and a partner. Look for light to be shed on a matter. Toward the end of the month, look for an unexpected occurrence in your social status and reputation. Deal with it as it comes.



## **Aquarius**

(January 20 – February 19)

During the start of the month, look for new beginnings in your creatively and romances. Go out with someone new. Find a new way to express yourself. Find a great book to read or a new band to which to listen. During the 2nd week, your friends and wishes may change, but true friends are forever. Change can sometimes be good, though. During the mid-month, look for light to be shed on matters of romance and friends, creativity and social groups, and wishes. Emphasis will be put on your work ethic and how you work. Let your charm come through now to impress everyone in work area. Toward the end of the month, if an unexpected change happens in your personal finances, just wait it out. I have faith that you can.

## **Capricorn**

(December 22 – January 19)

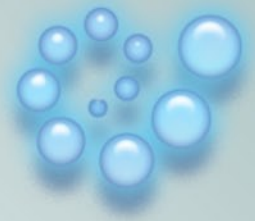
Toward the beginning of the month, changes should happen in regards to your work and work ethic. This could be everything from just changing the location to completely changing your job. That's up to you. During the 2nd week, use the things you've kept secret and in the back of your mind to transform what you can. During the mid-month, look for emphasis to be put on your partnerships. I'm inclined to think that this could include some romantic partner. Take advantage. Go on a date. Loosen up a bit. That's not something a Capricorn usually does. Look for light to be shed on matter of those secrets you can constructively use and that changing work ethic. Fruition is always signalled during this time. Toward the end of the month, don't be extremely surprised if the way you to talk to people starts to change and you may start to notice something different in your surroundings.



## **Pisces**

(February 20 – March 19)

During the beginning of the month, change up some things in your home and home life. Maybe repaint something or redo a room. Whatever you need to do, do it. Be creative. During the 2nd week, don't be afraid of changes in your career. In the eyes of the public, you may seem to transform. That's not a bad thing, necessarily. Use it wisely. During the middle of the month, emphasis will be put on matters of creativity and romance. Go out on a date with someone you admire. Take care of someone who needs it. Let your creative juices flow. Look for something to be brought to light in your social status and home. Perhaps use what you have at home to further your career. Just remember that home can always be used as a retreat. Toward the end of the month, don't be surprised if you find yourself changing a bit. That's okay. Change can sometimes be for the best.



## The wind down...

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### Acknowledgements

#### Image sources

Balloons: [www.clothestree.net](http://www.clothestree.net)

Press hat: [www.usagold.com](http://www.usagold.com)

Beach: [www.adventuresmithexplorations.com](http://www.adventuresmithexplorations.com)

Beach board: [www.flickr.com/photos/elmada](http://www.flickr.com/photos/elmada)

Earthquake: [www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com)

Hurricane: [www.etamparealestate.com](http://www.etamparealestate.com)

Flood: [www.psu.edu](http://www.psu.edu)

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Famine: [www.faqs.org](http://www.faqs.org)

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Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Avatar! Any comments, questions, suggestions or criticisms can be directed towards the editorial team. You can also send us any submissions you have for Avatar, which are a really important part of keeping Avatar alive. We appreciate any submissions that are made to us. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!

The Avatar Editors.

Please visit us at the Avatar page, [www.teenhelp.org/avatar](http://www.teenhelp.org/avatar), or email us at [avatar@teenhelp.org](mailto:avatar@teenhelp.org).